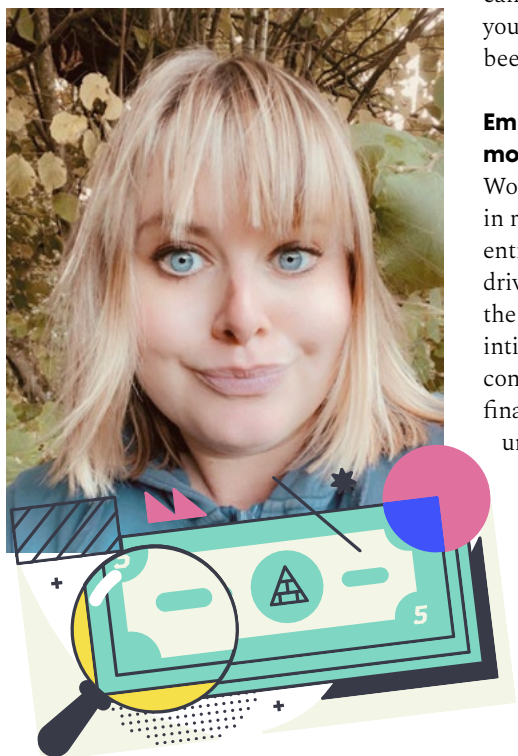


# Cultivating a money mindset that feels both empowering and exciting

Let's move out of money overwhelm to freelance financial freedom.

By Harriet Formby



“Creatives don’t do numbers.”

“Freelancers are hopeless with money.”

Sound familiar? These tired myths have held back brilliant, talented people for far too long. But what if managing money can feel as creative as your craft? What if you’re not bad with money – you’ve just been given the wrong tools?

## Empowering creatives to master their money

Working remotely from my off-grid office in rural Somerset, I help mission-led entrepreneurs, freelancers, and purpose-driven business owners who are changing the world for the better stop feeling intimidated by money and start feeling in control of it. My approach blends practical financial strategies with emotional understanding, ensuring that money works *for* you – not against you.

With over a decade of experience as an ICAEW (the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales) chartered accountant, fractional CFO (chief financial officer), and trauma-informed finance coach, I’ve worked across industries – from startups raising capital to established SMEs

and international businesses – guiding business owners to financial sustainability. I believe freelancers and creatives deserve the same tools and confidence.

## From numbers-phobe to financial advocate

Even though I’m a chartered accountant, I was never a ‘maths person’ – actually, it was my least favourite subject at school. But I discovered that finance and money weren’t just about accounts and tax deadlines; they could actually empower missions, support dreams, and amplify impact.

At university, I became immersed in social enterprise and entrepreneurship, supporting founders who were doing incredible things, and the positive side of numbers became apparent. I saw first-hand how finance touched every part of a business – helping ideas become reality. That’s when I realised financial knowledge wasn’t just about compliance; it was about unlocking potential.

I wanted to be part of the solution bridging the gap between the logical, analytical world of numbers and the creative, imaginative world of mission-driven businesses. So, I trained as a

chartered accountant because I knew we needed more people who could make finance accessible and empowering.

I took that passion into the corporate world, working on finance transformation for Fortune 500 companies. But after years of making money for faceless entities, I felt disconnected from real change. So, I returned to what truly inspires me – helping purpose-driven entrepreneurs and creatives take control of their finances in a way that fuels their vision.

### **Why freelancers and creatives believe they are bad with money**

We've all heard the outdated stereotype: "You can either be creative and broke or finance-minded and successful."

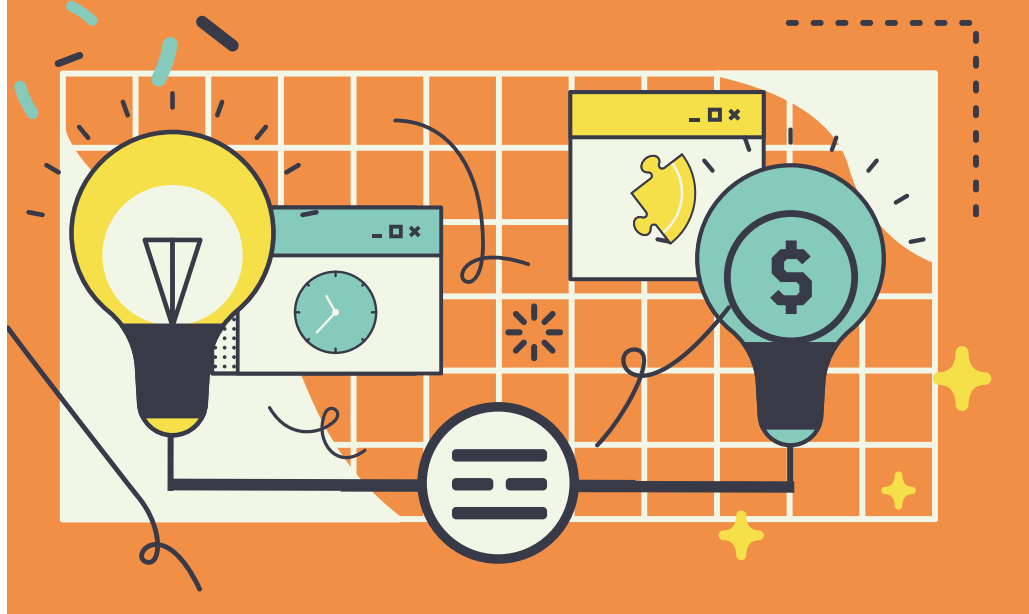
Total nonsense – just a story told to keep brilliant people small. And yet, it runs deep!

If you were confused by how maths was taught in school, it's easy to see why money often feels cold and complicated.

But it goes deeper than numbers; money is emotional. It represents security, success, opportunity, and even our self-worth. It's tangled up in fears about having enough, *being* enough, and whether we're "doing it right". That sinking feeling of discovering something awful.

The reality? Most freelancers struggle with money because they are conditioned to fear it and are never given the right tools to thrive with it.

Plus, when you run your own business, money is complicated because it has so many moving parts – it's no wonder it feels overwhelming.



## **“Setting a price feels like putting a price tag on ourselves.”**

### **Why pricing decisions and making money can feel so triggering**

Because money isn't just practical – it's personal. Pricing is deeply emotional and tangled up in self-worth, fear of rejection, and the worry of being "too expensive".

We're taught to be humble, not to ask for too much, and that talking about money is awkward. For many of us, setting a price feels like putting a price tag on ourselves rather than on the value we provide. When your creativity is so intertwined with your identity, pricing can feel like a judgement of your worth, not just a business decision.

It can be especially challenging to

recognise your value and confidently 'charge your worth' when your talents feel natural to you, and you enjoy your work – society often equates earning a living with hard graft, making it difficult to shake the idea that work should feel tough to be valuable.

On top of that, many freelancers have unpredictable income streams, making it harder to feel confident about pricing. And there are hidden costs many overlook:

- The time it really takes to complete your work
- 'Unpaid' time spent on admin, marketing, and overhead tasks
- Covering taxes, pensions, and financial security.

Your pricing should sustain you, support your business, and allow you to create freely – without burnout. A good starting point is knowing how much

## “Mastering your money isn’t about perfection – it’s about feeling empowered and resilient.”

you need to make overall, being realistic about how much time you have to give to each project, and understanding your cost base so everything you take on contributes to your bigger goals.

### What it really means to master your money

Mastering your money isn’t about perfection – it’s about feeling empowered and resilient. Knowing where you stand financially, having the confidence to plan, and a clear overview of everything.

It’s about creating sustainable systems that work for you, knowing your numbers without fear, and shifting from a scarcity mindset to an abundance mindset. It means feeling supported by money rather than derailed by it, where finances fuel your goals instead of causing stress.

But it doesn’t mean having all the answers all the time. It’s about building resilience to financial surprises, creating contingencies, and trusting yourself to adapt when things don’t go as planned. ●



## Cultivating a money mindset that feels both empowering and exciting

### Here are my top five tips:

#### 1. Explore your relationship with money

How do you currently feel about money? If money were a person, who would it represent to you? What could you shift in that dynamic to create a healthier, more empowering connection?

#### 2. Imagine money as energy

Instead of seeing money as something cold and distant, reframe it as an exchange of energy – one that expands and flows. Think of the energy you put into your work as something you give to others and money as the energy you receive in return. This perspective can also help with pricing – when you view money as part of this dynamic exchange, it becomes easier to charge fairly for the value and energy you provide. The more aligned you are with your finances, the more expansive and abundant this flow can feel.

#### 3. Find a finance system that works for you

Hate spreadsheets? Prefer a more visual, automated or intuitive approach? Find a method that fits your style – not just what works for others.

#### 4. Talk about money!

Normalise conversations around pricing, income, and finances. Join communities of freelancers rewriting the money narrative and discussing openly. There’s power in sharing and learning together.

#### 5. Make it fun

Money doesn’t have to be a chore. Set up finance coworking sessions with a fellow freelancer, reward yourself after a financial check-in, or turn your money routine into a cosy, enjoyable ritual, complete with delicious snacks.



Want more practical finance tips, mindset shifts, and empowering money conversations about how money can feel good and do good too? Follow Harriet on @[BelowTheLineFinance](https://www.instagram.com/belowthelinefinance) or visit [belowthelinefinance.co.uk](https://www.belowthelinefinance.co.uk) for down-to-earth finance resources, guidance and support.